

Task 3Suggested Teacher Prompt:“Students, imagine that the mayor or the school board is having a meeting to decide whether or not to keep funding school sports. You have an opportunity to present an essay, in the form of a letter, to the decision makers. What would you say? What claim would you make about school sports being good or bad for kids? What research will you call on to back up your claim?

You can address your letter to the mayor, the editor of the newspaper, or the head of the PTA or school board. Letters are, after all, really essays. So remember everything you’ve learned about writing essays for this task. Your letter should state a claim, or thesis, by taking a clear side, back up this claim with research, and refute the other side. Be sure to cite important references.”

Written Prompt:

“You have done some research on this issue now, and you know much more about the pros and cons of youth sports. Now, imagine that your school district is going to make a decision about continuing to fund sports programs in the schools. You have a chance to write a letter that will be read to the mayor, printed in the paper, or presented to the head of the school board or PTA. Your letter should state a claim or thesis by taking a clear side, back it up with research, and refute the other side. Your job is to argue whether, overall, sports are good or bad for kids. Letters are really just a form of essay, so use what you know about essay writing to structure your letter. Be sure to back up your claim with reasons and evidence, supported by facts and details, and analysis of sources from your research. Be sure to cite important references.”

Grade 8: Nonfiction Reading and Research-Based Argument Essay Writing “This letter is a quick fast draft – you’ll have a chance to extend, revise, and polish it tomorrow.”

